

Plushenko Changes Mind About Retirement, Eyes 2018 Run

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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SOCHI — Figure skater Evgeni Plushenko, who announced his retirement after withdrawing from the men's individual event in Sochi with a back injury, may now try to compete in the 2018 Winter Olympics.

"If need be, I will have another 10 operations ... I am not ruling out that I'll go for a fifth Olympic Games," he told Russian state television.

"I am not ruling out that I want to stay in sports, to prove [something] to many [people] and myself," he said Tuesday.

Contacted for further comment, Plushenko declined, confirming that he had said all he wanted to on the television show.

One of figure skating's great showmen, Plushenko pulled out of the individual competition

on Thursday, just four days after helping Russia win the gold medal in the inaugural team event.

Clutching the base of his spine, the 31-year-old hurt himself in the warm-up and did not take part in the event, although he skated on to the center of the rink and bowed to the crowd before waving farewell.

He then told reporters that he was hanging up his skates forever, bringing an end to one of the most celebrated careers in figure skating.

Plushenko won his first world championship in the United States in 2001 and triumphed again in 2003 and 2004.

He was relegated to the silver medal position at the 2002 Olympics in Salt Lake City, but confirmed his status as the sport's top drawcard when he added the Olympic title four years later in Turin.

Plagued by injuries, he announced his first retirement after Turin but made a comeback in 2008 and went on to win a second silver medal at the 2010 Olympics in Vancouver.

He announced his retirement for a second time and underwent a series of operations to repair the damage he had done to himself after years on the ice.

But the lure of winning gold in his home nation proved irresistible and he made himself available for Sochi, although his selection was controversial as he got picked in the Russian team ahead of the man who beat him at the national trials, Maxim Kovtun.

He justified his selection with an inspired performance in the team event, climbing back to the top of the winner's podium eight years after he won gold at Turin.

With his silver medals from 2002 and 2010, he joined Swedish legend Gillis Grafstrom, from the 1920s and 1930s, as the only skaters to win four Olympic medals.

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